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casions of "state and ceremony" he would receive one visitor after another with the mechanical hand-shake required of him, but to his intimates he confessed that his mind was frequently far away—with Sherman, perhaps, on his March to the Sea, with Grant in the Virginian Wilderness, or with Thomas in Tennessee. To the sensitive spectator who may have joined one of the groups near by the spectacle of this patient giant permitting hundreds to grasp his hand for an instant was pitiful in the extreme, and more than one has been tempted to remonstrate. But the public has established the custom and demands its perpetuation, and just now a young and attractive woman, is called upon to bear her share of the burden.

The present chief executive of the United States is probably better able to endure the physical strain of excessive hand-shaking than are most of his contemporaries. At all events, he has, up to this writing, given no signs of exhaustion, but the drain upon his vital powers must be enormous—no milder term is adequate—and the problem of abolishing, or in some way modifying, what is already a grave abuse, must, sooner or later, be considered. Men who hold a position involving such responsibilities as those of the President should not be permitted, much less required, to weary themselves unnecessarily. It is not beyond the range of possibility that under such a process of slow worriment—the worst kind of torture—some mental process might be induced that should inure to the public injury. This is merely thrown out as a hint, but suppose the President should go into the East Room determined to veto, let us say, a River and Harbor Bill, is it not easily within the range of possibility that his noble resolve might literally be shaken out of him before the ceremonies were over?

CHARLES LEDYARD NORTON.

IV.

NATIONAL PLAGUE-SPOTS.

As civilization grows older the problems of life grow more perplexing, the why and wherefore of human existence become more involved in doubt, and the conflict between good and evil seems to be growing yearly more in favor of the devil. Just as there are diseases which are rife among the rich, and seldom found among the poor, so in our national life there are ills which germinate in the cities, and from which the rural populations are comparatively free.

Man ages more rapidly in the town than in the country. The wear and tear of city life exhaust human vitality. Men live faster and spend themselves more freely in the city, and so the towns of the nation become centres from which radiate the arteries of trade and intelligence, bearing the products of human intellects and human hands into far-away homes, and promoting the free comparison and interchange of ideas, customs, and habits. Evil and good come and go with the human life that pulsates through these arteries of national existence, and the great cities, which are the ganglionic centres of the nation, spread the vices, which thrive so luxuriantly in their boundaries, until their evil influences are felt in Maine and California and Texas.

Great cities are, therefore, the plague-spots of the nation. They will cease to be plague-spots only when the virtue within them exceeds the vice. New York is the metropolis of crime, as she is the metropolis of trade, and nearly all the diseases to which the body politic is subject are found in her—some visible to everyone, others hidden in special localities, not to be seen unless carefully looked for. All have so vast a potentiality for evil that the whole nation is interested in the experimental efforts to purge and purify her. The reform of the electoral system,

as proposed by Mr. Rice, is one of these remedies. The enforcement of justice against corrupt officials is another, and so the list extends.

It may be doubted if the city, left to herself, has recuperative power sufficient to cure herself ; but the needed reforms can be accomplished if the public sentiment of the nation will, as its duty and self-interest require, strengthen the hands of the reformers.

GEORGE NELSON.

V.

OUR NATIONAL DIGESTION.

THE country has hitherto been able to digest all the incongruous elements offering themselves to it ; but just as a man who eats too much, or who bolts his food with haste is, sooner or later, sure to become a victim of dyspepsia, so the nation is now beginning to show symptoms of inability to turn into the bone and sinew of good citizenship the immense hordes of ignorant and biased foreigners who come hither. It has been at once our boast and our safeguard that we have made good Americans of the millions of foreign emigrants landing upon our shores. On the pre-Revolutionary stock of Dutchmen, Huguenot, Frenchmen, and Irish, English and Scotch men, we have grafted scions of the Welsh, Russian, modern French, and Italian races, and the fruit that has resulted has been sweet and wholesome. We have had three wars since we became a nation—one a family quarrel, which, happily, is now settled, and the other two with Spain and our natural enemy, Great Britain ; we have had differences with foreign nations, and the composite character of our nationality has borne us safely and triumphantly through all difficulties. Our composite nationality has been our preservation. Opposed to Great Britain, we have found our defenders in men of Scotch, Welsh, English or Irish descent. The generals who conducted our war against Mexico were nearly all descendants of the Latin races the Gallic blood predominating. And so it has ever been. We have had at our disposal the strongest and best race-traits of the races with which we were contending, blended and fused with the strong characteristics of other races into one harmonious whole.

But, alas ! all this has now changed. Our French immigrants now hate Germans. Our Irish citizens bear an ungovernable enmity to England. Our Italian children yield blind and unreasoning fealty to old-world influences. We are no longer able to digest the varied and hostile elements which our habit induces us to swallow.

We are beginning to realize now that unrestricted immigration is not an unmitigated blessing. We are beginning to talk about the necessity of restricting the privilege of citizenship. Why ?

I have stated the facts ; they must be but results of appreciable causes. Who can tell what those causes are ?

GEOFFREY CHAMPLIN.

VI.

NO SECTARIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

PLEASE permit me to enter an emphatic protest against the linking of our public schools with Mormonism and ballot-box stuffing by Cardinal Gibbons in the November number of your REVIEW. A system of popular education, growing up with our republic, in it and of it, directed and controlled by a body of teachers of the highest moral character, representative of and selected from among the people, in which is inculcated the principles, history, and patriotism of the republic's